



December 6, 2005

Career offender is sentenced to 11 years for heroin trafficking

A federal judge has sentenced **Steven Batista**, 30, of Providence, to 11 years in federal prison for heroin trafficking. In April, Batista admitted that he sold heroin to an undercover Providence Police detective on nine occasions last year. Codefendant **Lonnie C. Gasperini** was previously sentenced to ten years in prison.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the sentence, which U.S. District Court Judge Mary M. Lisi imposed yesterday in U.S. District Court, Providence. Because he has two prior felony drug convictions, Batista was sentenced as a career offender under federal sentencing law.

Batista pleaded guilty to ten charges: conspiracy to distribute heroin and nine counts of distributing heroin, including one in which the sale took place within 1,000 feet of a school.

In September, Judge Lisi sentenced **Gasperini**, 26, of Pawtucket, to ten years in prison for conspiracy and eight counts of distributing heroin, one of them occurring in the vicinity of a school.

At Batista's plea hearing in April, Assistant U.S. Attorney Adi Goldstein said that the government could prove that, on nine occasions between June 25 and September 27, 2004, an undercover Providence Police detective contacted Batista by pager or cell phone to arrange a heroin deal. Then either Gasperini, Batista, or both met the detective at a prearranged location in Providence to make the sale.

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Batista and Gasperini sold quantities of heroin ranging from one gram for \$150 to nine grams for \$1,200. One of the sales, on August 24, took place on University Avenue near School One.

Detectives arrested Batista on November 24, 2004 and seized \$38,000 in cash from a hydraulically operated compartment, known as a “hide,” in his vehicle.

The **Providence Police Narcotics and Organized Crime Bureau** investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Goldstein prosecuted it.

-30-

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